



# News Release

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## **STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT SETTLES LAWSUIT WITH ECOQUEST REGARDING UNCERTIFIED WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS**

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) has settled a lawsuit pending in Los Angeles County with EcoQuest International Inc. of Greenville, Tenn., State Public Health Officer Dr. Richard J. Jackson announced today. The lawsuit was related to allegations that EcoQuest offered for sale and advertised uncertified water treatment systems in California through local dealers and over the Internet. As part of the settlement agreement, EcoQuest will pay \$125,000, which will be split between Los Angeles County and CDHS pursuant to statute.

In the suit, CDHS alleged that EcoQuest and several California-based independent dealers claimed that their uncertified devices removed lead, arsenic, mercury, fluoride, nitrates, volatile organic chemicals, methyltributylethanol (MTBE) and microorganisms, such as bacteria, E. coli, Salmonella, Legionella and Shigella dysenteriae. California law requires CDHS to certify residential drinking water treatment devices for which health claims are made. CDHS investigated EcoQuest after consumers and other drinking water device manufacturers complained that the firm was making health claims for devices that were not certified for those claims. CDHS also investigated the firm's claims posted on the Internet and at home shows where the devices were sold.

EcoQuest disputed liability. In conjunction with resolution of the litigation, EcoQuest will submit to CDHS a new application for certification.

More than 400 drinking water treatment devices are currently certified in California. In order for a drinking water treatment device to be certified, an independent state-approved laboratory must confirm the manufacturer's health-related performance claims and ensure that materials within the device do not add contaminants to the treated water.

Certified devices include "point of use" and "point of entry" systems, which range from pour-through pitchers and faucet-mount, carbon-filter systems to reverse osmosis, ultraviolet disinfection and household water softeners. These devices are intended to provide an additional level of protection for individuals who need or want drinking water of a higher quality.

Contaminants removed by certified devices include organic chemicals such as MTBE, pesticides, herbicides and solvents; inorganics such as lead, mercury, and perchlorate; and waterborne pathogens, such as bacteria, virus and protozoan cysts, such as Giardia and Cryptosporidium.

A directory of certified water treatment devices and information about certification is posted on CDHS' Web site at <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/technical/certification/Devices.html>.